

Programs automate phone numbers

Is your Rolodex looking over-worked? It's time to join the computer age of phone directories.

I know of two programs that can help you get your personal telephone directory automated. Each does a superb job, depending upon your needs.

The first is a brand new, first edition named RollCall. It's available for \$49.95 from Qandu Computing Inc., 12040 S. Lakes Drive, Reston, Va. 22091, (800) 888-3648.

RollCall is an enticing, memory-resident program that simply allows you to put information you'd keep in a Rolodex in your computer instead.

Qandu hasn't been so cutesy as to make the RollCall screen resemble a Rolodex card. However, just like a Rolodex, RollCall's "cards" have just enough room for a name, address, phone number and three blank lines of additional information.

Setting up the card file, and getting in and out of it, couldn't be easier. Once you're in the pro-



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gram, hitting the return key allows you to "flip through" your directory, just as you would a Rolodex.

RollCall also is great for people who write letters to the folks in their Rolodexes.

That's because it lets you cut and paste the name, address and the date from the card into your word processing document.

Although the program performs these tasks easily and impressively, there is a big downside: That's all it does.

If that's all you want it to do, great. But I always compare new products with the best programs I've seen. If you want a program that will computerize your personal phone directory and do more, you should look at Prodex, one of

my all-time favorite programs.

Prodex is available from Prodex Development Co. for \$89.95, P.O. Box 31515, Seattle 98103, (206) 527-2898. It costs almost twice as much as RollCall, but does about five times more.

■ If you have a modem on your personal computer, Prodex will automatically dial a number for you out of its directory. I think this is an exceptionally handy feature, and I find it's almost silly for a program that holds phone numbers to be without it.

■ Prodex has to-do lists and monthly and personal calendars, too, which are both lacking from RollCall. These can pop up while you're in the middle of any other application.

■ Prodex's most spectacular feature is the "folder" that opens up behind each name in the directory and allows you 100 lines for notes. All you do is press a hot key and the note area appears for any name you choose. This is most handy for taking notes while you're

talking on the phone.

About the only feature RollCall has that beats Prodex is capacity. Prodex is limited to 500 entries, but RollCall is limited only by the amount of memory available.

Still, I'm very impressed with RollCall's performance. And because it is a new product, I'm sure that Qandu will expand the program's capabilities in future versions.

■ The bottom line: If your first step is simply to replace your personal phone directory or Rolodex with a computerized version, I heartily recommend RollCall for its simplicity and ease of use. But if you're looking for a program that can do a whole lot more for not much more money, I'd recommend you consider Prodex.

Hillel Segal's column includes evaluations of gadgets, seminars and books designed to enhance business productivity. Segal is a management consultant based in Boulder.